

Nick Pestell and Maria Purcell: Gaining support for your entry through Facebook

About Maria and Nick

Nick Pestell is a social media expert at Facebook. He has fifteen years of experience helping businesses share their news and connect with their audience using digital media.

Maria Purcell advises brands on how to best use Facebook to achieve their business objectives.

As part of the Aviva Community Fund Team, they are sharing their top tips on how to set up a Facebook page for your organisation and using Facebook to drive support for your cause.

How to drum up support for your entry on Facebook

Facebook helps you make personal connections with the people most likely to have an interest in your charity or community project; whether that be your friends, people who have been personally affected by your work, or members of the community who have seen what you have achieved.

It's a really simple way of building an online community of supporters where you can share updates about the work your charity or community organisation is doing, post pictures of people taking part in what you do, and share the URL to your Aviva Community Fund page to encourage those who like your Facebook page to click through and vote for you.

Getting started

Facebook is designed to be very simple to use for both individuals and projects such as your own. Here's our quick three-step guide to lead you through the process of starting up your own Facebook page.

Step one: create a Page

A Page is your organisation's shop window on Facebook. It's where people can find out more about you and the inspiring work you do.

Setting up your Page is quick and easy. Ensure that you use the same name for your Facebook page as you use on other social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram etc.). When you set up your Page, you can also request that your page links to a web address such as "facebook.com/mycommunityproject", to make your Page easy to find.

Add a profile picture to your Page that clearly shows that it belongs to your charity or community organisation. Usually people like to use a logo, or an image of the work they do. This is the picture that appears when Facebook users search for your page. You can also upload a cover photo which is a landscape image that appears at the top of your Facebook page and allows you to show your group or organisation in a little more detail.

Step 2: write your 'About' section

In the 'About' section you can detail the work your charity or community organisation does, give information about how to join your group, add a URL link to your website or other social media channels, provide contact information and the link to the your Aviva Community Fund page so people who visit your page can click through and vote for your entry.

Step 3: check your Page regularly

Once your page is set up remember to check it regularly to ensure:

- your 'About' section and contact information is up to date
- the URL links to your website (if you have one) and other social channels are correct and working
- you update your cover photo at seasonal moments like Easter and Christmas, or with recent activities you have run to keep your supporters engaged

Now you have set up your Facebook page, you are ready to start 'posting'

A Facebook 'post' can take the form of a message or announcement, a photograph or a video that you share on your Facebook Page. You can share short updates with your supporters about upcoming events, information about new people you are helping, or just photos of the work your organisation is doing.

When writing a post, be sure to:

1. Be relevant, timely and entertaining. A post can be as simple as a brief update on how a training session went, or can be slightly more detailed about inspiring work your cause is trying to achieve e.g. *We had a great training session at dusk with the Women's XI team today, they are prepped and ready for Saturday's match* [insert picture]
2. Talk with, not to, your supporters. If people post on your page asking for information, or commenting on the work you are doing, try to reply and have a conversation with them. It will make them much more likely to vote for your cause
3. Keep your post short and sweet; people absorb messages much better when they are concise. You also need to tell your supporters what you need them to do: i.e. click the link to vote, don't just post the link with no explanation; it won't mean anything to them
4. Use images and videos to keep your page very visual and fun. People are much more likely to share your news with their friends on Facebook if you do. It is really simple to add a photo or video to a Facebook post, you simply click the relevant button under the text box (for a photo click the camera icon, for example) and upload the file directly from your computer, tablet or smartphone
5. Aim to post around twice a week to keep your supporters updated and interested in your project and encourage them to vote

Make the most of your audience

Finally, remember to ask those who engage with your Page on Facebook to share your posts with their friends and family. Word of mouth is one of the best ways of sharing news about the inspiring work you do, telling new people about your charity or community organisation and sharing your need for funding is a great way to drum up extra votes for your entry.

“Setting up a Facebook page for Kyrece’s Legacy meant that we could keep our community updated on our progress through daily posts as well as remind them to vote if they hadn’t already done so. We were also able to use Facebook to thank our community for their support, which is really important, without them we wouldn’t have won.”

Simone Francis, Kyrece’s Legacy, 2015 Winner